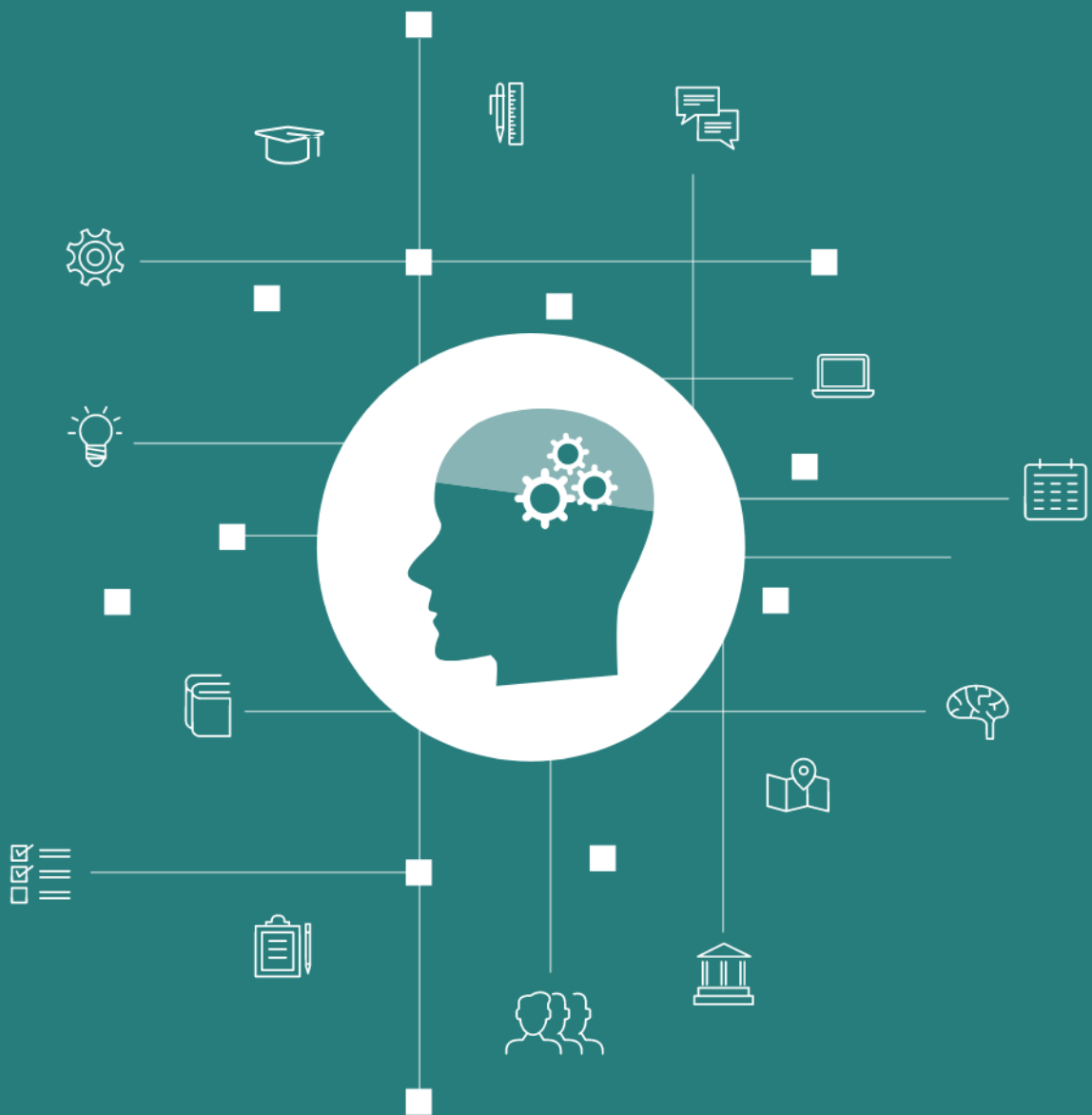


Expanding the Definition of College and Career Readiness

The CCLR Framework



Expanding the Definition of College and Career Readiness

Traditionally, college and career readiness (CCR) in schools has been focused around three areas: academic skills, career knowledge and college knowledge. With this laser focus, students understand the importance of succeeding in classes and preparing for standardized tests, as well as various aspects of careers. Students also prepare for college by conducting college and scholarship searches, determining their college major, and ultimately applying to college. For some students, this is enough. But for others, including the 33% of first-generation students who graduate from high school every year, there is more to the story.

With that in mind, it's time to expand the definition of college and career readiness. Although academic, career and college knowledge are vital to a student's future success, they also need to be equipped with the skills to succeed after high school - whatever path they may choose. When students understand their strengths, know how to overcome obstacles, and learn how to set goals effectively, they can carry those skills through to all areas of their life. When they learn successful teamwork skills and know their online presence, they become an effective employee. And when they understand how to make successful transitions, they are equipped for life.

5 Ways to Expand College, Career and Life Readiness in Schools and Districts



Make the social-emotional connection.



Collaborate with local workforce.



Focus on transitions early.



Think outside the box.



Make data a consistent focus.

Traditional College and Career Readiness

For years, the term college and career readiness has been used interchangeably as both a way to define the academic readiness to succeed in a postsecondary institution, as well as an understanding of the skills needed to gain admission to a postsecondary institution or career. Throughout time, college and career readiness has been just that - primarily focused on colleges as a means to career. Career assessments, research and apprenticeships, along with college searches, visits and applications, all combine to inform students of the decisions ahead.

Even though we need to expand the approach to college and career readiness, we cannot abandon the roots that lead to life-ready students, including academic skills and college and career knowledge. Instead, it's important to examine how we can expand the lens of CCR to incorporate skills that students not only need to develop for college, but also need to succeed while they are there - or throughout whatever path they choose following high school.

The Value of Career Knowledge

Students who are able to identify their life interests and career aspirations are more likely to connect their current academics to their future aspirations. These students are more likely to graduate from high school, earn more money, and be more involved in their community (Stam, 2011).

Career-ready students need to be able to understand their own strengths and interests and connect them to a career that will allow them to lead a fulfilled, successful life.

Schools can help to create a career-going culture by providing students with the tools necessary to understand careers and clusters, as well as engage in conversations surrounding the structure and value of purposeful, interest-based careers.

Aside from the career search, career knowledge and readiness involves a variety of skills - from technical and job-specific skills, to employability and academic skills (Curry, 2013). Career-ready students need to be able to understand their own strengths and interests and connect them to a career that will allow them to lead a fulfilled, successful life. Gysbers (2013) describes a career-ready student as understanding the skills necessary to have the mental and strategic capacity to understand who they are and how to build toward a career that provides meaning and purpose to their lives.

Career knowledge builds on the work that students complete throughout social emotional exploration. Exploring career clusters, understanding the meaning and structure of various jobs, and undergoing various career searches all help students build a base to determine the training necessary to reach their future goals. From there, career goal setting and specific career fit conversations can lead into further exploration of college knowledge and transitions.

The Need for College Knowledge

Students who possess skills that contribute to college readiness have an increased likelihood of attending college (Conley, 2012). The term “college readiness” is widely used in education today and is a common measurement that school districts use to ensure schools and districts are meeting common benchmarks. It is often measured by factors such as standardized test scores, graduation rates, and college-going percentages (ACT, 2012).

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Definitions of college readiness have a theme of academic, personal, and technical preparation. Students who are college-ready incorporate academic knowledge to enroll in a postsecondary institution while taking credit-bearing courses (ACT, 2012) and they are equipped with the tools to be successful once students actually matriculate to that college (Lombardi, Conley, Seburn, & Downs, 2012).

The amount of college knowledge a student receives at home is dependent on the education level of their family. Almost two-thirds of K-12 students in the United States are first-generation students (NCES, 2016). Families of first-generation students likely lack some of the basic college knowledge needed to successfully apply for and enroll in a higher education institution. Topics such as postsecondary opportunities available, college fit, and paying for college must be taught to both students and parents in order to create a vast understanding of the options available after high school.

College knowledge is not limited to 4-year institutions. Students should be aware of the postsecondary training that best fits their career goals. Certificate programs, military training, apprenticeship opportunities, and community and technical colleges should all be part of the opportunities presented to students within college knowledge.

Placing an Emphasis on Academic Skills

Academic preparation is a topic well-researched in college readiness studies. With the advent of Common Core Standards (Applebee, 2013) and the popularity of topics such as rigor, advanced placement, and literacy, academic preparation is a main topic in the CCLR conversation (Conley, 2011).

Course rigor is a major predictor for indicators such as GPA, standardized test scores, and college enrollment (College Board, 2013). When students push themselves to take more challenging courses, they are more likely to find success in readiness for both college and career. Underrepresented students who take an AP or IB course in high school are almost 20% more likely to persist in a 4-year college (Klepfer & Hull, 2012) and students who

have completed an algebra II course in high school are more likely to find success in both college and career (Achieve, 2008).

Literacy is another consideration in academic readiness, but it is important that students have skills beyond just reading text (Ivey, 2011). In addition to reading and writing, students need to have skills related to generating new knowledge, investigating problems, and researching to create their own original information. In addition, students who are first-generation or from underrepresented populations need to develop cognitive strategies that go beyond that of a typical student - including test-taking skills and comprehension strategies. Limited English language skills, financial situations, and family obligations may contribute to a deficit in developing these cognitive strategies for college readiness (Caralee, 2012).

Preparing students academically requires teaching academic knowledge, as well as equipping students with the tools of how to study. Learning styles and study skills are vital to the success of a student (Manochehri & Young, 2006). Students who are confident in how they learn and how they study will carry this skill into their postsecondary experience and into their career. Test prep, academic goal setting, and course planning rounds out the academic planning that helps lead to student success.

Expanding the Definition of CCR

The landscape of CCR is evolving. It is no longer adequate for schools to merely prepare students solely for admission to college. Students need to be prepared for life, and schools and districts must play a part in equipping them with the skills to navigate stressful situations, be successful learners, and to understand how to set goals and drive toward them. Students need to understand the opportunities that are available to them after high school and how those pathways help them achieve their goals in life.

Almost 60% of employers state that graduates are not prepared for the workforce in areas of oral and written communications, as well as work ethic (NACE, 2017). This shows a major gap between the skills employers are looking for in successful employees, and the skills that are currently connected to career readiness in middle and high schools. The typical career search isn't enough any more. When schools prepare students to be successful in their future careers, they need to look beyond just the connection of interests and career profiles. Employers want their incoming employees to be effective communicators, collaborative teammates, and to have a growth mindset (Job Opportunity Network). Although some of these skills are gained throughout post-secondary experience, they are even more effective when instilled at a young age.

Therefore, it is time to expand the definition of college and career readiness. By incorporating life readiness into the typical CCR terminology, the industry standard takes on a whole new meaning. No longer are we constrained to just teach students about colleges and careers, but we can

now begin to equip them with the essential skills that they will need to be successful, productive adults who are on a path to fulfill their life goals.

When the definition of CCR is expanded, so many of the skills that have been deemed important - 21st century skills, non-cognitive skills, and social emotional learning - can be incorporated into a holistic program that helps both students and educators see that preparing for life doesn't end at college admission. As educators begin to incorporate life-ready skills as early as middle school, students become better able to see their future, set goals to attain, and remain engaged in school and their community.

Connecting Social Emotional Learning with CCLR

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a vital part of a school counselor's job. SEL lessons and activities take place as early as elementary school to teach students how to get along, how to recognize their own strengths, and how to overcome obstacles. SEL evolves through middle and high school to help students develop a growth mindset, persevere, and develop grit to carry them into adulthood.

Students with a grit and a growth mindset are more likely to overcome failure, have belief in their ability to learn, and to achieve their goals

The benefits of social emotional learning are extensive. According to a meta-analysis by CASEL (2011), SEL skills are connected to an increase in academic performance and graduation rates, and a decrease in behavior referrals. Instead of one-off lessons for SEL and CCR, these two concepts can be combined with academic, career, college, and transition readiness to best-equip students for their future.

Research surrounding growth mindset and grit shows that students who develop these skills are more likely to succeed in their K-12 and postsecondary education and even in their career. Students with a grit and a growth mindset are more likely to overcome failure, have belief in their ability to learn, and to achieve their goals (Grant & Dweck, 2003).

As the definition of CCR begins to expand, it is imperative that SEL is integrated into the overall program. The SEL toolbox equips students to successfully transition to college, in their time in the military, or as they enter the world of work. Social and emotional skills are life-long and it is time that they are recognized as part of college, career and life preparation.

Interpersonal Skills Jumpstart Workplace Success

Deliberately devoting time to interpersonal skills, especially 21st century skills, teamwork, and communication, can help to minimize the gap between the skills students are graduating high school with and the skills needed to successfully enter the workforce. Collaboration, teamwork,

and communication skills are among the most sought-after tool sets that employers look for in employees (Wagner, 2010).

Interpersonal skills don't need to be taught through individual counseling lessons. When they are integrated into the classroom it improves the learning of these skills. Through working together and communicating, students can imbed the skills they need at an early age and allow them to build a foundation for successful collaboration throughout middle and high school, into post-secondary training, and on to the workplace. Developing teamwork skills through classroom exercises better prepares students to be productive members of their post-secondary path.

Significant research has been done on the value of caring adults in the lives of students. Teachers who provide encouragement and contribute to a college-going culture within their school can significantly impact the college-going attitude and college choice of students (Muhammad, Smith, & Duncan, 2008). Adult resources in schools, including teachers, counselors, and college access programs, help students make informed decisions and equip them with college search and decision-making skills (Gandara, 2002). In many underrepresented populations, involving adult support members in the development of a student helps keep the discussion about college readiness moving in daily conversations at school and at home (Yamamura, Martinez, & Saenz, 2010).

Build Successful Transitions

Discussions on transitions traditionally occur during the senior year of high school and mainly focus on the transition to college. However, students are constantly undergoing transitions as soon as they begin middle school.

Research on engagement and hope finds that these two qualities begin to drop significantly in students as they begin to progress from middle school to high school. An unsuccessful transition, even as early as the change from elementary to middle school, can result in a decline in academic performance, motivation, and self-efficacy (AMLE, 2002). If students have the support they need to make successful transitions, that engagement can be sustained throughout the transition to middle school, into early high school, and carried into high school graduation.

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Summer melt is an important concept for schools and districts to be aware of as they send students into their postsecondary experiences. Summer melt - the term used for students who enroll in a postsecondary institution but do not actually make it to campus for their first day of college - has rates as high as 44% in some areas (Chewning, Cox, & Page, 2014). Schools and districts need to provide a culture of helping students navigate and succeed through

transitions so that by the time students are on their own, they are prepared to ask questions, live on their own, and persist when facing obstacles.

Various activities and lessons can help students prepare for and navigate through successful transitions. Transition surveys are traditionally the main vehicle for addressing changes in the lives of students. However, by focusing on building a foundation of skills that benefit successful transitions such as self-advocacy, overcoming obstacles, and even budgeting knowledge, students can be prepared with all of the knowledge they need to thrive in the face of change.

The College, Career and Life Ready Framework

The changing needs of students highlighted the need to expand the definition of CCR, and sparked the research behind, and creation of, the College, Career and Life Ready Framework. This framework acts as a blueprint to prepare middle and high school students for success after graduation. The framework is organized around the crucial competencies that students need to master in order to ensure long-term success after high school: Social/Emotional Learning, Interpersonal Skills, Academic Skills, Career Knowledge, College Knowledge, and Transition Skills. When implemented, this practical tool set helps schools and districts of all sizes define, measure, and track success for their college, career and life readiness initiatives. The result is a purposeful approach to CCLR that drives long-term student engagement and improved outcomes.



CCLR Framework | Methodology

The CCLR Framework is the product of various inputs. A full review of state-required individualized learning plans, approved ESSA plans, and various school and district scopes and sequences helped to build the primary structure of the framework. Professional standards from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), AASA's Redefining Ready, and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) also informed the framework. Conversations with educators and professionals in the field of school counseling and college and career readiness validated each theme and competency.



15

School and district leaders



31

State ILP plans



15

Approved ESSA plans



3

National models:
ASCA
CASEL
Redefining Ready!



16

Field experts



50+

School and district CCLR
scopes and sequence
implementation plans



30+

Peer-reviewed
research studies



10,000+

Successful school
and district implementations



Millions

Of college, career and life
ready students

CCLR Framework | Implementation

Implementation of the CCLR Framework is a school or district-wide endeavour. The CCLR Framework is intended to be a guide as institutions adopt the strategy of preparing all students for life beyond high school graduation, into post-secondary experiences and their eventual career. By undergoing these sequential steps, schools and districts can drive a thoughtful, long-lasting implementation of CCLR-centric programming.



Align to the Strategic Plan: 94% of district strategic plans include aspects related to college, career and life readiness (Student Success Research Center, 2018). Ensure that your strategic plan includes preparing students with not just the academic, career, and college knowledge they need to thrive, but also by adding in social-emotional needs and communication and transition skills necessary to help students thrive in life beyond high school.



CCLR Across the District: The CCLR Framework is designed to incorporate all members of the school and district community. Lessons related to the framework do not need to exist solely in school counselor classroom lessons. Rather, they should be integrated into conversations and curriculum across the school and district. Reports, new initiatives, and strategies should all be aligned to competencies and how they best serve students.



Objectives & Activities: Implementation of the CCLR Framework should be a deliberate process. A scope and sequence of objectives and activities should be constructed and communicated at the beginning of each school year, and evaluated quarterly and measured and expanded upon at the end of each year.



Measure: Evaluation of data is an iterative process. To create equity it is imperative that every student receive programming related to each of the competencies. Measuring task completion and outcomes can be done throughout implementation. By breaking down data into student groups, proposed pathways, and grade point average, schools and districts can decide the impact of programming on each student and adjust to improve outcomes.

How to Expand the Definition of CCLR in Schools



Make the SEL connection: Deliberately make social and emotional learning part of CCLR programming. Connect qualities like grit, perseverance, and growth mindsets to career- and life-readiness skills. Teachers, counselors, administrators, and even local workforce members should share how they overcame obstacles to thrive in their current career. When conducting strengths and other assessments, ask students how they can use their strengths to shape their future.



Collaborate with local workforce: Local businesses are an asset, no matter the size or setting. Invite local businesses to join classrooms to discuss the value of teamwork, to collaborate on apprenticeships, job shadowing, and volunteer opportunities, and to provide career-knowledge insights.



Focus on transitions early: Capture the hope and engagement level of elementary and middle school students by helping them to manage transitions successfully. By assisting students in understanding how to self-advocate, manage change, and adapt to new surroundings, they will be even better prepared to manage transitions after high school and into adulthood.



Think outside the box (or counseling lesson): College, career and life readiness is not a segmented set of lessons. The theme of CCLR should carry through into each classroom, advisory period, and after-school activity. Resilience, communication skills, teamwork, and growth mindsets are just an example of competency-related objectives that can be integrated into each strand of the school day. Get everyone involved in the CCLR way of life, and task all adults in the school or district to instill these characteristics into their daily interactions with students.



Make data a consistent focus: Constant improvement can't be measured without data analysis. Task completion is just the beginning of the data that should be collected to show the outcomes of college, career and life readiness initiatives in schools and districts. Take a deep dive into the data that is driving outcomes such as course rigor, graduation and college enrollment rates, and other indicators important to your school or district. Don't wait until the end of the year to realize a change in course is necessary: Consistently review data at certain points throughout the year - weekly, monthly, or quarterly - and share metrics often with all stakeholders involved in CCLR implementation.

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About the Naviance CCLR Framework

The College, Career and Life Readiness Framework is a research-backed model that outlines **six competencies** that students in grades 6-12 must achieve to become college, career and life ready. Each competency outlines themes and objectives to further define success, as well as **grade-specific activities** to achieve each of the grade-specific objectives. The framework provides guidance on the key metrics to track related to each competency.

Educators can assess the maturity of their organization's college, career and life readiness initiatives with a research-based diagnostic assessment and a summative assessment.

For more on the CCLR Framework and to take the Framework assessment, visit www.naviance.com/cclr-framework



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Hobsons.com/Naviance

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About Hobsons

Hobsons helps students identify their strengths, explore careers, create academic plans, match to bestfit educational opportunities, and reach their education and life goals. Through our solutions, we enable thousands of educational institutions to improve college and career planning, admissions and enrollment management, and student success and advising for millions of students around the globe.

About Naviance

Naviance is a comprehensive college and career readiness solution that helps districts and schools align student strengths and interests to postsecondary goals, improving student outcomes and connecting learning to life.